

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USBERL 01783 281140Z

14

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAJ-01

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FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2998

UNCLAS USBERLIN 1783

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, US, WB

SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT

REF: STATE 211862

1. THROUGHOUT PAST WEEK, WEST BERLIN DAILY PRESS HAS GIVEN PROMINENT AND EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO NORTH KOREAN ATTACK IN DEMILITARIZED ZONE ON AUGUST 18 AND TO SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS. STORY HAS ALSO APPEARED, WITHOUT EDITORIAL COMMENT, ON TELE; 8 89,. THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTED PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON SUBJECT BY LOCAL OFFICIALS OR ORGANIZATIONS.

2. QLTHOUGH WEST BERLIN NEWSPAPERS BASICALLY HANDLED PANMUNJOM INCIDENT AS TRAIGHT NEWS DRAWN FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS AND DEUTSCHE PRESSE AGENTUR WIRE DISPATCHES AND GAVE BOTH US AND NORTH KOREAN POSITIONS, MOST TERMED NORTH KOREAN ACTIONS "MURDER" IN NEWS REPORTS AND GAVE LITTLE PLAY TO NK ACCUSATIONS THAT AMERICANS ATTACKED FIRST. ONLY PRO-SPD NEWSPAPER SPANDAUER VOLKSBLATT MAINTAINED STRICT NEUTRALITY BY REFERRING TO AFFAIR CONSISTENTLY AS "INCIDENT." MAIN EMPHAIS IN ALL PAPERS AS WEEK PROGRESSED WAS HEIGHTENING OF TENSIONS AS US AND SOUTH KOREA ORDERED MILITARY ALERTS AND NORTH KOREA MADE LOUD PROTESTS.

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PAGE 02 USBERL 01783 281140Z

3. COMMENTARIES, WHICH APPEARED IN THREE WEST BERLIN

DAILIES, ACCEPTED US VERSION OF EVENTS WITHOUT QUESTION. INDEPENDENT DER TAGESSPIEGEL SAID THAT "BRUTALITY WITH WHICH TWO AMERICAN OFFICERS WERE SLAIN AND ADDITIONAL AMERICANS AND SOUTH KOREANS WERE WOUNDED IN THE DMZ NEAR A CONTROL POINT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF." RATHER THAN DWEELL ON EXTREME AND GUESOME NATURE OF NORTHKOREAN ASSAULT, HOWEVER, BOTH TAGESSPIEGEL AND DER ABEND SAW IT AS NO SURPRISE, RATHER AS PART OF CONCERTED CAMPAIGN BACKED BY PRC TO END UN MANDATE IN KOREA. LONG HISTORY OF NK VIOLENCE AT DMZ WAS ANALYZED AS STRATEGY INTENDING TO DEMORALIZE US REPRESENTATIVES OF UN AND MAKE US SICK OF SUPERVISING CEASEFIER. TAGESSPEIEGEL WARNED THAT TERMINATION OF UN MANDATE WOULD EMBROIL US TROOPS IN UNCONTROLLABLE CONFLICT BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA IN EVENT OF EMERGENCY AND EXPRESSED FEAR THAT NORTH KOREA, LIKE NORTH VIETNAM, WOULD DECLARE LIBERATION OF SOUTH FROM AMERICAN TROOPS. BERLINER MORGENPOST CONCLUDED THAT US MILITARY PRESENCE IN SOOUTH KOREA PROBABLY HAS TO BE MAINTAINED IN ABSENCE OF TJOINT PEACE GUARANTEE BY US, PRC, AND SOVIET UNION, AND TAGESSPIEGEL ENDED ITS EDITORIAL WITH REMINDER THAT UNITED STATES STILL BEARS HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY AND BURDEN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

4. NONE OF PRESS LINKED EVENTS IN KOREA WITH SPECIFIC INTERESTS OR VITAL CONCERNS OF GERMANS OR BERLINERS. OVERALL IMPRESSION CONVEYED WAS THAT WHILE KOREA, AS POWDERKEJG, COJLD EXPLODE WITH WIDE IMPACT, IT REMAINS PRIMARILY WITHIN AMERICAN SPHERE OF ACTION. STRENGTH OF US COMMITMENTS EVERYWHERE IS OF COURSE OF PSECIAL CONCERN TO BERLINERS. GEORGE

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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